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## Rasa Analysis of Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*

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### Abstract:

Rasa is an aesthetic feeling aroused in the reader or spectator when he witnesses an effective presentation of art. Sage Bharata in ancient India pioneered and Abhinav Gupta elaborated the theory of Rasa. According to the Rasa Sutra, rasa nispatih is a result of the conjunction of vibhāva, anubhāva, and Vyābhicāribhāva, which appeals to the Sthāyibhāva and leads to rasa realization. *Hayavadana* is a two-act play, originally written in Kannada by Girish Karnad. He himself has translated the play *Hayavadana* in English. There are two stories, one is of two best friends, Kapila and Devadatta, and a lady named Padmini, another is about a horse headed man- in search of completeness. Author has used various dramatic techniques like, Narrator/ Sutradhar, Puppets, Use of masks, and subplots. Any literary work consists of Rasa in it. In this research paper, the researcher wishes to study *Hayavadana* in the light of Rasa Theory. This play has already been studied from different perspectives like myth, realism, identity crisis, portrayal of woman, and incompleteness. There is a scope to study this Indian work of art in English from the point of view of Indian Poetics, specifically Rasa Theory.

**Keywords:** Rasa, Drama



## 1. Introduction

*Hayavadana* is a play in Indian English Literature originally written in Kannada by the well-known playwright Girish Karnad and he himself has translated it into English. The play consists of the main story of Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini, their friendship, and love. Simultaneously there is a tale of a horse headed man, in search of completeness. Karnad has implemented various dramatic techniques like Narrator (Sutradhar), Puppets and the use of masks, and effective dialogues. There is a scope to study this Indian work of art in English from the point of view of Indian Poetics, specifically Rasa Theory. Rasa is a concept in Indian Poetics which focuses on the dominant states of mind and the emotional response of a reader or spectator while reading or watching an effective presentation of art. This research paper analyses this play in light of Rasa. It is analysed as a reader only.

## 2. Review of Literature

Literary theories provide valuable tools for critical readers to analyse texts from various perspectives. In the realm of drama, which is a performative art, Bharat Muni extensively covered elements such as music, dance, stage, characters, and the audience in his *Natyashastra*. Within this comprehensive framework, the Rasa theory, also introduced by him, plays a crucial role. It helps to delve into the aesthetic emotions evoked in readers or spectators when a play is effectively presented, enhancing the understanding of the art form.

Originated in Indian context particularly in Sanskrit, rasa theory has been applied to the Western Literature as well. Mahendra Kumar Budhathoki in his study found that the major rasa in *Twelfth Night* is Śringāra Rasa and subordinate rasas articulated are Karuna, Hāsya, Raudra, bibhatsa, and Adbhuta. Mahendra observed that emotions, aesthetic pleasure, and Rasa experience that are aroused by complete deindividualization give plays their form and life. The reader or the spectator goes through the aesthetic experience while reading or watching the play *Twelfth Night* when they identify themselves with the same emotions shared with characters. Representation of human emotions through effective dialogues, actions, and characterization allows the reader or spectator to feel the emotions which the author has felt earlier while composing the play.



Rasa can be considered as the heart of all elements in a drama. In Western Literature, William Shakespeare's plays represent human life and its aspects effectively using various dramatic techniques. In this research, Dhvani has analysed Shakespeare's *Tamburlaine the Great Part I & II* in light of Rasa Theory pioneered by Bharat Muni in *Natyashastra*. The dominant Rasa generated through the actions of the play is Raudra which is directly connected to the Dominant state of Anger. She analysed this dominant state of anger with reference to Aristotle, Darwin, William James, psychologists specifically Sigmund Freud. All states of mind combined with Krodha leads to Raudra Rasa nispatih. "... we love to feel even fear or sorrow if it is detached from all practical consequences (Ghosh, 2018)."

Rasa theory having Indian origin seems to be equally applicable to World literature but there is a scope to study it in Indian context first. Arzoo and Manju focus on the origin of Rasa Theory and its relevance in the Indian literary pieces. The rasa theory has been invented in the Indian context, particularly emphasizing on Performative art like drama. Rasa indicates tastes but, in this context, it is considered as an aesthetic flavour. In Indian Literature rasa theory has an abundant lucid impression of Alamkāra rasa, Mimānsa rasa, Gangadhar, and many more. The theory of Rasa resembles equal importance when applied to the Indian or Western literary pieces.

Dr Habeeb C. discusses the application of Sanskrit literary analytical tools, Rasa and Dhvani, to interpret John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." It highlights the poem's sensual and imaginative qualities, emphasizing Keats' use of Bhavas (emotions) and suggestive power to create a successful poetic experience. The content suggests that approaching Keats' poem from a Sanskrit literary perspective can yield an interesting reading experience, viewing "Rasa" as an imaginative experience. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of contemplation and awareness of language's suggestive potential when analysing poetry.

Madhurantika Sunil, in his research paper *Application of Rasa Theory in James Joyce's a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* offers a profound perspective on the study's core theme. It emphasizes that literature, whether examined synchronically or diachronically, fundamentally embodies the essence of life and human emotions, possessing an enduring quality that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. The intersection between Indian



and Western literature, particularly in the realms of poetics and aesthetics, is highlighted, with a specific reference to James Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" as an example of the Bildungsroman genre influenced by German philosophy. The abstract also touches upon the role of emotions in literature and the challenge for critics in understanding how emotions are depicted and communicated to readers, introducing the concept of the Rasa Theory from Indian aesthetics as a key analytical tool. In the literature review, these key points will serve as a solid foundation for further exploration and analysis of the research paper's content.

The Theory of Rasa, originating from the ancient Indian dramatic principles outlined by Bharat Muni in his *Natyashastra*, remains relevant in modern times. It centres on human emotions and aids in analysing drama. To understand a play through the lens of Rasa Theory, one must identify the emotional elements expressed. Additionally, it's essential to examine how these emotions are conveyed and the challenges in achieving the full realization of Rasa. Rasa Theory is highly esteemed in Indian Aesthetics and is widely studied and applied in both Indian and Western literature by researchers worldwide.

### 3. Research Objectives

Research Objectives for this research paper are as below:

- 1) To analyse *Hayavadana* in light of Rasa
- 2) To identify rasas in *Hayavadana*
- 3) To analyse how rasas are used in *Hayavadana*

### 4. Research Hypothesis

- There is no dominant Rasa in *Hayavadana*



## 5. Research Methodology

Qualitative research method is used in this research to analyse an Indian English play applying a classical Indian theory of aesthetics pioneered by the Sage Bharata. The play has been analysed based on Rasa sutra, its basic elements: Vibhava, Anubhāva, Vyābhicāribhāva, Sthāyibhāva. Researchers have used literary text and critical and theoretical resources as well.

## 6. Rasa Theory

Rasa theory has its origin in the treatise *Natyashastra* of Bharat Muni in ancient India. It was further discussed and developed by Bhattalollata, Bhattatauta, Srisankuka, Bhattanāyaka, Udbhata, Abhinavagupta, Mammatabhatta, Visvanathan, Jagannatha Pandita and others. Except *Abhinav Bharti* of Abhinavagupta, their works are not available.

It is an Indian concept of aesthetic flavour, an essential component of any work of visual, auditory, or literary art that can only be suggested or experienced not described. It is a kind of contemplative abstraction in which the inwardness of human feeling suffuses the surrounding world of embodied forms. Thus, it can be said that rasa is the aesthetic feeling that is created in the reader or spectator when he witnesses an effective presentation of the art.

“Vibhāvānubhāva-vyābhicāri samyogad-rasa-nispattih”

The Rasa is accomplished as a result of the conjunction of Vibhāva, Anubhāva, and Vyābhicāribhāva, which appeals to the Sthāyibhāva which leads to the Rasa experience. (Sethuraman-191)

Vibhava is the cause or main source of emotions. Theoreticians who came after Bharata have divided into two: 1) Ālambana Vibhava and 2) Uddipana Vibhava. anubhāva means consequences, bodily expressions by which emotion is expressed. Vyābhicāribhāva are transitory states which are not dominant or permanent, but they feed the dominant states. Sthāyibhāva are labelled as the king of all the other bhava by Bharata. They are eight in number and are inborn gifts of men.



## 7. Rasa Analysis of *Hayavadana*

*Hayavadana* is a play written by an Indian playwright and actor Girish Karnad. The play explores themes of identity, love, and the search for completeness. The story revolves around two friends, Kapila and Devadatta, and Padmini. Devadatta is intelligent and knowledgeable, but he is physically weak, while Kapila is strong and athletic but lacks intelligence. Padmini is attracted to both men and is torn between them.

In their quest for completeness, the characters encounter a horse-headed person named Hayavadana. He struggles with his own identity crisis and yearns to become fully human. The major themes of this play are search for completeness, identity crisis, complexities in human relationships, friendship and love. It ends with a moral lesson that true completeness and fulfilment can only be achieved through self-realization and acceptance. *Hayavadana* is considered one of the best plays in Indian English literature. It is known for its unique mixture of emotions, social satire, and mythology.

Hasya rasa has its root in the dominant state of laughter. It can be created from comic statements, use of pun, different looks, etc. In the play *Hayavadana*, humour is used as a way to provide relief from the complexities of identity, desires, and search for completeness. Padmini is a great source of comic sentiment most of the times. She is a lady with light mood and a good presence of mind. Except Padmini, other characters also use humorous language and that appeals to the Sthāyībhāva of mirth and lead to Hāsya rasa nispatih. By using humour, Karnad is able to explore complex themes in a way that is both entertaining and thought-provoking.

The Erotic statement or Śringāra rasa has its origin in the dominant state of love. It has two bases: (1) Union (sambhoga) and (2) Separation (viprālabha). (Sethuraman-23-24)

The basis of terrible sentiment or Bhayankara rasa is the dominant state of fear in human beings. It is highlighted by Karnad in *Hayavadana* by exploring the darker aspects of human desire and identity. As the story progresses, the Rasa of Bhayankara is evoked through the characters' struggles with their own desires and identities. The climax of the play, in



particular, is a terrifying and bloody scene that highlights the consequences of the characters' actions and desires.

In this play, Vira Rasa is used to depict characters' bravery and determination in their pursuit of their goals. Vira Rasa originates from the dominant state of energy and enthusiasm. It is presented through the characters of Devadatta and Kapila in different ways. Both are energetic but in different sense, one is powerful with his physic and another with his mind. On the other hand, Padmini, as a lady full of wit, deals with every situation in her own unique ways with sharp mind.

Karuna Rasa is used to evoke sympathy and compassion in the readers/ audience in this play. It is a pathetic sentiment which arises from the dominant state of sorrow. In the play, it is presented through the pathetic situation of Padmini, as she is torn between her love for the mind of Devadatta and attractive Physical appearance of Kapila. The title character of Hayavadana is also in pathetic condition as he is neither a complete human being nor a horse.

### ➤ **Śringāra Rasa in *Hayavadana***

Śringāra Rasa, which means the sentiment of love or romance, is also present in Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana." The play explores complex themes of identity and desire, and Śringāra Rasa is used to depict the characters' romantic relationships and their desires for love and intimacy.

One of the primary ways in which Śringāra Rasa is expressed in the play is through the love triangle between Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila. Padmini's desire for both Devadatta and Kapila, and the men's love for her, create a sense of romantic tension and drama that is central to the play.

Furthermore, Karnad uses Śringāra Rasa to explore the complex nature of desire and the difficulties of achieving romantic fulfilment. The characters' struggles with their desires and the consequences of their actions create a sense of longing and yearning that is central to the play's exploration of the theme of identity.



Additionally, the play also examines the societal expectations and norms that constrain the characters' romantic relationships. Padmini's struggles to reconcile her desires with societal expectations create a sense of tension and conflict that adds depth and complexity to the play's exploration of Śringāra Rasa.

Overall, Śringāra Rasa in "Hayavadana" serves to depict the characters' romantic desires and relationships, while also exploring the complexities and challenges of achieving romantic fulfilment in the face of societal expectations and norms.

### ➤ **Rudra Rasa in *Hayavadana***

Rudra Rasa, which means the sentiment of anger or fury, is present in Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana." The play explores complex themes of identity and desire, and Rudra Rasa is used to depict the characters' anger and frustration as they grapple with their desires and societal expectations.

One of the primary ways in which Rudra Rasa is expressed in the play is through the character of Devadatta, who becomes consumed by anger and jealousy when he learns of Padmini's desire for Kapila. Devadatta's fury and desire for revenge drive him to take extreme measures that ultimately have tragic consequences.

Furthermore, the play also explores issues of societal injustice and inequality that can give rise to feelings of anger and frustration. The characters' experiences of discrimination and oppression create a sense of fury and outrage that is central to the play's examination of Rudra Rasa.

Additionally, Karnad uses Rudra Rasa to explore the darker side of human nature and the destructive consequences of unchecked anger and fury. The characters' inability to control their anger and desires ultimately leads to their downfall and serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked emotions.

Overall, Rudra Rasa in "Hayavadana" serves to depict the characters' anger and frustration as they grapple with their desires and societal expectations, while also examining the darker aspects of human nature and the destructive consequences of unchecked emotions.





## 8. Rasa

"Adbhuta" is one of the nine rasas or emotions in Indian aesthetics, which translates to "wonder" or "amazement". In Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana", the rasa of Adbhuta is central to the narrative and is closely tied to the themes of identity and desire.

The play is a retelling of a traditional folktale from Karnataka, India, which follows the story of two friends, Padmini and Kapila, and their respective lovers, Devadatta and Hayavadana. The play explores the complexities of desire and identity, as Padmini finds herself torn between her love for Devadatta's intellect and Hayavadana's physical perfection.

Throughout the play, the rasa of Adbhuta is evoked through the fantastical elements of the story, including the central figure of Hayavadana, a man with a horse's head. The audience is left in a state of amazement and wonder as they navigate the surreal world of the play and the characters' struggles with their own desires and identities.

Ultimately, the play uses the rasa of Adbhuta to challenge traditional notions of beauty, identity, and desire, inviting the audience to question their own assumptions and preconceptions.

## 9. Findings and Conclusion

Looking at the surface level of this play, it can be said that the dominant Rasa of Hayavadana is Śringāra Rasa. But the play incorporates multiple rasas or emotions like Hāsya rasa, Karun rasa, Bhayankara rasa, Vira Rasa. There is no dominant Rasa in *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad. It is a play skilfully presenting a unique blend of majority of all emotions like laughter, love, energy, anger, and fear in human beings.



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